

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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1. The airfield was 500 meters east of the town exit of Tartu (26°42'E/58°22'N), Estonian SSR, between the Narva Highway and the Emajogl River. (For details see Annex). The field, shaped like an irregular quadrilateral, was 3 kilometers in its largest E-W dimension and 2.6 kilometers in its largest N-S dimension. A railroad connection did not exist but it was planned.
2. The field, an improved air base, was to become the "first-class airfield of Estonia" after completion of the expansion to the east.
3. a. The main runway, 70 x 1,800 meters, had a 14-centimeter concrete cover on a 20-centimeter subgrade filled with sand. The concrete slabs were 4 x 5 meters, the joints being filled with tar.
b. The N-S runway, 40 x 600 meters, was of the same condition and thickness as the main E-W runway which slightly sloped toward the town. Both runways had a slight arch.
c. There was a northern and southern concrete taxiway, each 13 meters wide. The first section of the northern taxiway, starting at the hangars, consisted of up-end bricks, the joints being filled with tar. This construction, however, proved a failure as the bricks expanded in winter and raised the surface. Therefore, the remaining section of the taxiway as far as the runway was given a cover of concrete slabs, each 12 cm x 4 x 5m. The northern 600-meter section of the southern taxiway with aircraft revetments on its side had been reconditioned, its cover being 8 cm thick.

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4. Three rows of aircraft revetments, 30 meters one behind the other, were north of the field. Each row had many curved earth walls, each about 30 meters long and 2 meters high, usually 20 meters apart. The individual walls were, for protection against splinters, in a chequered position to each other. Three or four rows of planes, very close together, were parked in front of the walls, a total of 200 to 250 aircraft being counted. About 14 revetments, 80 to 100 meters apart, were on both sides of the southern taxiway as far as the curve towards the north. They were about 1 meter below surface, their splinterproof walls being 1½ meter high. They were 15 meters long, 10 meters wide and had 5-centimeter concrete floors, the subgrade consisting of a 15-centimeter broken stone and brick layer.

5. The landing field had a firm grass cover. The section between the main runway and the southern taxiway, including the two runways, the taxiways, the landing strip and all revetments on both sides of the taxiways, was drained. The main sewer, 80 centimeters in diameter, was 2 meters underground as far as 2 kilometers from the field border and then ran in an open ditch to the Narva highway. The smallest pipes were 2 inches in diameter.

6. There were two hangars, each about 12 x 50 x 80 meters, one of which was occupied by about 25 biplanes and the other serving as a repair hangar. Fifty to one hundred replacement engines were stored in one section of the repair hangar and cranes, lathes, and a 50-ton oil-operated press in the other section. The crew was composed of 20 to 25 men. No large-scale repairs were done there but engines were exchanged. There were 12-cylinder in-line V engines which [redacted] had a performance of 2,000 hp. About 10 engines were trucked away about every eighth day.

7. The barracks buildings on the western edge of the field served as billets. The airfield administration was housed in the next to last building of the second row of houses. The first row of buildings was composed of garages and two-story warehouses in which aircraft engines were also stored. An estimated 800 men were quartered in the barracks buildings. This number was increased by 300 to 400 field workers and ground personnel in January 1947.

8. A fuel dump which was to have a railroad spur track was near the northern road. From the outside only a large hill, 1 to 1½ meter high, with a lane leading to the road, was seen inside the dump. Two large tanks, each of about 50 cubicmeters capacity, had been exchanged in 1945. The aircraft were refueled from 20 three-axle 315-special tank trucks of a 2-cubicmeter capacity each.

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9. A bomb dump, about 60 x 100 meters, in a woods north of the field, stored several rows of 100-kilogramm bombs, in piles of five bombs each.
10. The field had only one obstacle light.
11. Beside the hangars there were a two-story, 12 x 15-meter building and a tower in which were a radio station, a weather station and a switchboard. A 10-meter radio mast was at the side. The crew had about 30 men. Four or five radio trucks were at the field.
12. The staff was quartered in a villa in a small park on the edge of the field, near the barracks buildings at the Yama-Hokkoya road intersection. A general was CO of the field. A radio truck was standing in the park (not entered on the available town map).
13. The field was occupied by about 25 biplanes and 250 to 300 ground attack aircraft.

Description of ground attack planes: In-line engine, landing gear retracting outward, two machine guns in each wing, a 20-mm gun in rear seat, trapezoidal wings, considerably rounded wing tips, two-seat cockpit for pilot and aerial gunner.

Formation flying and bombing at ground targets was practiced day and night.

14. Construction project: The area east of the field as far as the N-S road terminating in the Narva Highway was surveyed from mid-1946 to early 1947, when the PW camp was suddenly dissolved. The following improvement work was to be completed by late 1948:

a. Expansion of main runway by 800 meters eastward as far as a small fir woods which was to be cleared.

b. A second N-S runway, running perpendicular to the main runway 200 meters north and 1,000 meters south, was to be constructed 500 meters east of the existing N-S runway. The main runway was to be 70 meters wide, the perpendicular runway 50 meters.

All farmers whose farmyards were in the expansion area and two more whose farms bordered on the northern edge of the field had been given notice in 1946.

The expansion area extended:

As far as the N-S road on the east.

As far as the expansion of the southern taxiway on the south.

As far as the expansion of the northern taxiway on the north.

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The attached sketch was supplemented according to the available town map.

Comment:

Report, though covering an old period, contains essential supplementary information on the improvement of the field. It is assumed that the expansion work was meanwhile completed so that the field will be suitable for air units equipped with novel planes. According to other reports, the field was mainly occupied by fighters up to March 1948. More recent reports on the field have not been received.

1 Annex:

1 Annex: Tartu Airfield.

Legend to Annex:

- 1 = Weather, radio station and switchboard
- 2 = Hangar for biplanes
- 3 = Repair hangar
- 4 = Main parking site for about 250 planes
- 5 = PW camp
- 6 = Northern taxiway
- 7 = Main runway
- 8 = Perpendicular runway
- 9 = Road with aircraft revetments
- 10 = Fuel dump
- 11 = Sewer
- 12 = Bomb dump
- 13 = Villa housing staff
- 14 = Airfield administration building
- 15 = Garages, spare parts dump
- 16 = Division hospital with surrounding houses
- 17 = Farmhouse, partially stripped
- 18 = Barracks buildings and billets
- 19 = Ration supply depot

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- 20 - Southern taxiway with aircraft revetments
- 21 - Reconditioned section of taxiway
- 22 - Expanded section of main runway (800 meters)
- 23 - Planned second perpendicular runway
- 24 - Small fir-woods, cleared of timber
- 25 - Eastern field border, field path to Narva road
- 26 - Varmhouse
- 27 - Brandy factory
- 28 - Estonian National Museum
- 29 - Parking site for radio trucks
- 30 - Terrain with bomb craters
- 31 - Destroyed buildings
- 32 - About 800 meters to a windmill on a hill.

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